

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O R 121421 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY SANAA
SECSTATE WASHDC 3877
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T JIDDA 1947

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS USCINCEUR AND DOD

DHAHRAN FOR GENERAL SMITH

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE, YS, MCAP, SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO YAR

REF: JIDDA 1706

1. ON PRINCE SULTAN'S INSTRUCTIONS SAUDI A/ COS(G-3) GENERAL QABBANI, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR MAY 12 TO REPORT THAT HE AND HIS MEN HAD COMPLETED A DETAILED AND PRODUCTIVE EIGHT- DAY INSPECTION OF YAR'S MILITARY SITUATION AND NEEDS. TEAM'S ACTIVITY NOT CONFINED TO SANAA OR HEADQUARTERS ELEMENTS, BUT INCLUDED KAMARAN, HODEIDAH AND DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITS IN THE FIELD. QABBANI HAD FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE:

(A) TANKS. HE REGARDED COASTAL PLAIN BETWEEN AL- MUKHA AND HODEIDAH AS STRATEGICALLY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO YAR AND WITH TERRAIN WELL SUITED TO ARMOR OPERATIONS.

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HE NOTED YEMENI REQUEST FOR ARMORED BRIGADE OF APPROXIMATELY 62 TANKS AND HOPED TO DISCUSS WITH US ADVISORS BEST MEANS OF FULFILLING YAR'S NEEDS. (WITHOUT TANKS, HE BELIEVED APC'S WOULD BE OF LITTLE USE.) YAR'S SIX BATTALIONS OF T-34 TANKS ARE OF LIMITED VALUE BECAUSE OF MAINTENANCE SHORTCOMINGS AND LACK OF SPARES. SAUDIS FOUND THAT WHILE YAR OFFICERS UNFAMILIAR WITH CAPABILITIES US ARMOR, THEY UNIFORMLY CONCERNED THAT ANY NEW ACQUISITIONS OF US ORIGIN MUST BE BETTER THAN T-34'S THEY CURRENTLY HAVE.

(B) RECOILLESS RIFLES. YAR'S REQUEST FOR TWO BATTALIONS OF 106 MM RECOILLESS RIFLES APPEARED REASONABLE AND NECESSARY.

(C) AA. YAR HAD MORE THAN 100 37 MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS IN ITS INVENTORY BUT WAS LOW ON AMMO.

(C) NAVY. SAUDI TEAM HAS ALSO LOOKED INTO YAR'S NAVAL NEEDS AND SHORTCOMINGS.

(E) INFANTRY WEAPONS. YAR HAS REQUESTED WEAPONRY TO EQUIP THREE INFANTRY BRIGADES OF APPROXIMATELY 1300 MEN EACH.

2. AMBASSADOR THANKED QABBANI FOR HIS PRESENTATION, AND EMPHASIZED OUR HOPE THAT SOME EARLY ASSISTANCE COULD BE PROVIDED YAR AT SAME TIME THAT LONGER RANGE ISSUES WERE BEING WORKED ON. IN PARTICULAR WE THOUGHT YAR WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE IN FORM OF 106 RECOILLESS RIFLES, MACHINE GUNS, TRUCKS AND WATER CARRIERS. HE RECOMMENDED THAT GENERAL QABBANI REVIEW HIS FINDINGS WITH USMTM IN RIYADH AND TO PROVIDE CONCLUSIONS REACHED VIA SUCH JOINT STUDY BOTH TO PRINCE SULTAN AND HIMSELF. GENERAL QABBANI -- WHO WILL TRAVEL TO RIYADH MAY 13 -- AGREED THIS A GOOD SUGGESTION AND WOULD CONTACT USMTM RIYADH SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL.

3. FOR USMTM: SUGGEST COL. VINCENT AND US OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH QABBANI ON MILITARY AID PROGRAM SHOULD NOW ENDEAVOR ASSIST HIM IN REFINING HIS FINDINGS TO SOME CLEAR AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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FOR ASSISTING SAUDIS WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES AND TRAINING PLANS.
THACHER

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED USCINCEUR AND DOD.

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NMAFVVZCZ

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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